



For Immediate Release
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Runner Says New Fire Fee Bills Will Be Delayed

SACRAMENTO – George Runner today announced that the Board of Equalization will delay this year's fire fee bills in response to a request from Cal Fire. The bills were scheduled to begin mailing April 2.

"The delay appears to be related to concerns about accuracy of the billing data," said Runner. "I'm pleased to see that Cal Fire is admitting there's a problem."

Earlier this week Runner called upon Cal Fire to delay thousands of potentially inaccurate fire fee bills until after the Board of Forestry has an opportunity to correct the State Responsibility Area maps.

In [his letter](#), Runner wrote: "As a matter of fairness, it is important that the billing of these accounts be delayed until these 'errors and inconsistencies' are resolved by the Board of Forestry."

As reported by the [Mountain Democrat](#), a recent Cal Fire investigation found "errors and inconsistencies" in State Responsibility Area boundaries. Among its findings, the review identified more than 1,300 parcels in El Dorado Hills that don't belong in the SRA.

"The state shouldn't be knowingly sending tax bills to anyone who doesn't actually owe the money," said Runner. "It's just wrong."

In recent weeks, Cal Fire has drawn significant media attention and public scrutiny. The agency was forced to admit the existence of a secret \$3.66 million slush fund, and has also drawn criticism for illegally diverting fire fee funds to pay for wildfire investigations.

The State of California also was recently served with a class action lawsuit brought by the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association challenging the constitutionality of the fire fee. Runner plans to file an amicus brief in support of the lawsuit.

“The fire fee is tax policy at its worst,” said Runner. “Ever since the Legislature enacted this illegal tax, it’s created one problem after another. If the Legislature doesn’t act quickly to repeal this fiasco, the courts need to strike it down.”

Elected in November 2010, George Runner represents more than nine million Californians as a member of the State Board of Equalization. For more information, visit www.boe.ca.gov/Runner.

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